



### WATER RESOURCE COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING

**Quarterly Meeting.** The Water Resources Coordinating Council (WRCC) meeting was held on September 28, 2016, in Altoona. Secretary of Agriculture, Bill Northey, called the meeting to order. The following was discussed.

**Natural Resources.** Adam Schnieders, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), stated that of the 150 point source permits that need to be issued, 92 have been issued to date, and 29 feasibility studies have been completed.

**Agriculture and Land Stewardship.** Jake Hansen, Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (DALS), reported the following:

- Eight demonstration projects currently being funded with money from the Water Quality Initiative (WQI) will have their completion dates extended.
- A new request for urban demonstration project applications that will receive funding from the WQI will be announced in the next week or two.
- There were 900 new users of cover crops that received funding from the statewide practices allocation from the WQI in 2016. There were also 1,000 users that had participated in the statewide allocation in previous years.

**Buffer Strips.** Brett Lorenzen, Director of Midwest Outreach of the Environmental Working Group, discussed the results of a study completed on buffer strips. The study included analysis of waterways in 37 counties in southern Minnesota. This land is used for agriculture production. The study also reviewed 1,800 miles of waterways in Iowa. The findings of the study were that, in both states, a small number of landowners are causing environmental problems. The completed study will be available on the [Environmental Working Group](#) website in a few weeks.

**Regional Conservation Partnership.** Marty Adkins, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) talked about the Regional Conservation Partnership Program that began in the 2014 Farm Bill. The Program is designed to encourage conservation projects in watersheds that create a number of partnerships. Federal funding is available, but the goal is to leverage additional project funding from other sources. Projects funded in Iowa for 2016 include:

- The Upper Cedar Watershed Urban-Rural Partnership located near Charles City. Federal funds of \$1.6 million were awarded.
- The Midwest Agriculture Water Quality Partnership in the DALS that received \$9.5 million in federal funds. The Partnership has over 40 partners that have contributed \$38.0 million in nonfederal funds to build an innovative public-private collaboration to reduce nutrient loss and improve water quality.
- The Improving Working Lands for Monarch Butterflies Partnership that received \$6.0 million. Iowa is participating in restoring habitat for monarch butterflies on agricultural land.

**Iowa Watershed Approach.** Allen Bonini, DNR, provided an update on the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant awarded to Iowa for the Iowa Watershed Approach. The goals of the grant are to reduce flooding and advance water quality. The grant administrator is the Economic Development Authority, and the total grant amount is \$96.7 million. The grant will include funding to nine watershed sites that will fund a watershed management authority, develop a water assessment and watershed plan, and implement projects that reduce downstream flooding and improve water quality during and after flood events. The funding is expected to be available in October 2016.

**Next Meeting.** The next meeting will be held in the fourth quarter of 2016, but no specific date was announced.